

## Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 FDRE-00 AGRE-00 AID-05  
EB-08 ICA-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10  
NSAE-00 DODE-00 /063 W  
-----101455 241524Z /46

R 241438Z MAY 78  
FM USMISSION GENEVA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0049  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 07986

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SREF, SU  
SUBJECT: REFUGEES IN THE SUDAN

REF: A. STATE 129021; B. KHARTOUM 2314

1. MISSION HAS RAISED SUBJECT PRESENTED REF A WITH UNHCR  
DESK OFFICER FOR SUDAN, GEORGE IACOVOU, WHO HAS PERSONALLY  
VISITED CAMPS IN CDUNTRY, AND WAS, IN FACT, THERE LAST  
AUGUST 16 DURING STATED PERIOD OF INDIANA GROUP VISIT.  
IACOVOU AT FIRST OBSERVED THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL CAMPS IN  
THE GENERAL AREA OF GEDAREF, AND HE COULD NOT BE SURE WHICH  
ONE THE INDIANA GROUP HAD SEEN. HE ASSUMED INITIALLY, HOW-  
EVER, THAT IT MIGHT BE THE TRANSIT CAMP AT WAD-EL-HILEIWU.  
ALTHOUGH ACTUAL POINT OF DEPARTMENT'S QUERY WAS DEALT WITH  
LATER IN DISCUSSION (SEE BELOW), IACOVOU'S REMARKS CON-  
CERNING CAMP SITUATION IN SUDAN IN GENERAL IS CONSIDERED  
OF SUFFICIENT INTEREST TO RELAY TO DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY  
FOR BACKGROUND.

2. IACOVOU SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A SMALL PROBLEM CON-  
CERNING THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOODSTUFFS FROM PORT SUDAN TO  
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THE CAMPS, BUT THAT HE WOULD DISPUTE THAT THE SITUATION  
WAS OUT OF CONTROL EVEN LAST AUGUST, AND THAT IT IS CER-  
TAINLY IN HAND AS OF NOW. HE SAID THAT UNHCR DOES HAVE  
A SMALL PROBLEM IN THAT IT WORKS EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH THE  
SUDANESE GOVERNMENT AS AN OPERATING PARTNER, AND THAT THE  
GOS ASSESSES THE NEEDS, RELAYING THEM TO UNHCR FOR SATIS-  
FACTION. IN HIS RECOLLECTION, THERE HAS BEEN NO SITUATION

IN WHICH UNHCR HAS DISPUTED THE GOVERNMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF REQUIREMENTS IN REGARD TO THE REFUGEES.

3. THE SITUATION LAST AUGUST OF A HOLD UP IN DELIVERIES RESULTED FROM A TEMPORARY LACK OF TRUCKS DURING A HIATUS IN SEABORNE DELIVERIES, WHEREUPON UNHCR AUTHORIZED LOCAL PURCHASE OF TEN TRUCKS TO EFFECT DELIVERIES OF FOODSTUFFS TO THE VARIOUS CAMPS. WHEN THESE TRUCKS WERE NOT PROMPTLY FORTHCOMING, FOR TECHNICAL REASONS, UNHCR FURTHER AUTHORIZED TEMPORARY RENTALS OF TEN MORE TRUCKS TO FILL THE GAP. HE MENTIONED THIS POINT IN CONNECTION WITH THE INDIANA GROUP'S PLANS TO PROVIDE AND MAINTAIN ONE TRUCK WHICH, HE COMMENTED, WAS CERTAINLY WELCOME BUT WOULD RESOLVE ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF THE TOTAL PROBLEM.

4. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE WAD-EL-HILEIWU TRANSIT CAMP, NO ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AS SUCH IS OPERATED BY UNHCR IN THE GEDAREF AREA. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED TO REFUGEES IN THIS REGION ONLY FOR A BRIEF INITIAL PERIOD, AFTER WHICH THEY ARE RESETTLED IN MORE PERMANENT COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY RAISE THEIR OWN FOODSTUFFS. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A SMALL PROBLEM LAST AUGUST DUE TO THE TRANSPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION SITUATION DESCRIBED ABOVE, THERE WAS NO SERIOUS MALNUTRITION AMONG THE REFUGEES EVEN DURING THAT TIME. IACOVOU OBSERVED THAT THERE WAS RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONTS TO MOVE THESE REFUGEES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FURTHER BACK FROM THE BORDER. THE FRONTS THEMSELVES CONSIDER THERE IS PLENTY OF FOOD AND WORK AVAILABLE IN THE AREA FOR THE REFUGEE POPULATIONS.

5. WAD-EL-HILEIWU IS THE ONLY CAMP WHICH IS NOT A SETTLEMENT AS SUCH. THERE IS NO LAND UNDER CULTIVATION THERE AND IT IS THEREFORE THE ONLY CAMP WHICH RECEIVES WFP ASSISTANCE. IT SHELTERS SOME 30,000 PEOPLE. UNHCR IS SATISFIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING WHAT IT CAN FOR THIS POPULATION.

6. WHEN IACOVOU INQUIRED AS TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE INDIANA GROUP AND WAS GIVEN THE NAMES IN REF A, HE IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED THEM AS MEMBERS OF THE ETHIOPIAN RELIEF AND SELF-HELP ORGANIZATION (ERESHU), AND SAID THAT UNDOUBTEDLY THEY WERE REFERRING TO THE UMRAKOBA CAMP, A SMALL ONE SHELTERING APPROXIMATELY 700 NON-ERITREAN REFUGEES (ETHIOPIANS). THESE HAVE "SPECIFIC PROBLEMS", PROMINENT AMONG WHICH IS THAT THEY ARE CHRISTIANS IN A MUSLIM COUNTRY. IACOVOU MENTIONED AS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THE MATTER OF MEAT, WHILE ANOTHER HAD TO DO WITH THE PROXIMITY OF THE CAMP TO THE BORDER; (AGREEMENT HAS NOW BEEN REACHED TO REMOVE IT FURTHER FROM THE FRONTIER). IACOVOU FELT THAT

EVEN IN THIS CAMP, HOWEVER, THE SITUATION HAD PROBABLY BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED TO THE VISITORS, AND THAT THERE WAS NO REAL SHORTAGE OF FOOD FOR THE REFUGEES. COMMENT: IACOVOU MENTIONED THAT DURING HIS VISIT TO THE CAMP, THE DOCTOR HAD DISPLAYED A TENDENCY TO EXAGGERATE AND TO PUT FORTH UNUSUAL CASES, SUCH AS EXHIBITING ONE CHILD OR TWO WHO HAD ARRIVED AT THE CAMP IN MALNOURISHED CONDITION, TO MAKE HIS POINT. WE FEEL THAT IACOVOU CONSIDERS THE APPEAL OF THE INDIANA GROUP TO BE BASED ON MISLEADING INFORMATION AND OBSERVATIONS, STIMULATED BY SPECIAL INTERESTS IN THE PARTICULAR REFUGEES CONCERNED. END COMMENT.

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ICA-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 FDRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10  
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7. IACOVOU IS GOING TO LOOK INTO THE SITUATION FURTHER  
AND REPORT BACK IF HIS FINDINGS DIFFER IN ANY RESPECT FROM  
THOSE GIVEN ABOVE. VANDEN HEUVEL

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Control Number:** n/a  
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